

Letter from Alexander Graham Bell to Mabel Hubbard Bell, March 18, 1891, with transcript

Alexander Graham Bell to Mabel (Hubbard) Bell. 1336 — 19th Street, Washington, March 18th, 1891. Dear Mabel:

You really do write very nice letters — I only wish you could tell me how to do it. You seem just to sit down and wag your pen with no thought — and out comes a bright cheery wholesome letter. Its really worth while having you away sometimes just for the sake of a letter — if you are not away too long. I really was quite proud of your letter this morning and took it over to read to your mamma. She was very much pleased — and I asked her if she did not think it was well expressed. “Oh yes” — she said “it is very nice — but what — Oh what does she mean by:”

“T he Sea — big — grand — and UTTERLY IMMOVABLE” ! I felt squelched but ventured to suggest that the ocean had not retired from Atlantic City since you were there last. Still your mamma was utterly immovable in her criticism though she did admit that your letter was awfully nice. I hope by the time you receive this — you may be more comfortably settled within easy reach of “the flesh-pots of Egypt” — If your hotel doesn't suit you go to the Traymore — and if that doesn't do — why — Traymore again !

Oh! — Blaine was ill in bed yesterday and the newspapers say he had too much dinner party the night before ! Your mamma feels her responsibility — and has been round to inquire for the invalid. Arthur assures her that the cook was a good one as he had employed her himself on a former occasion for a dinner party of his own ! The good qualities 2 of the Chef do not rest upon his statements alone — for I can vouch myself personally for the excellence of the dinner — and I have almost recovered from the effects already!

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Mary Symonds has the Grip. Mr. McCurdy is all right now. You evidently frightened his sister — for a telegram came today from Baddeck warning him of the danger of a relapse. I replied that he was O. K. and that his half dozen nurses would prevent a relapse. However too many cooks, etc. — he sat all this evening in the study with door and window both open and complains of having taken cold. I was there too and never thought of my telegram to Baddeck. I think he'll be all right in the morning.

Prof. Fay will publish my comments upon Blattner's article upon "The Natural Method" — but does not care to reprint the paper on Marriage as it has already appeared in the Silent World and Deaf-Mute's Journal — and has been printed in permanent form by the Volta Bureau. I send a copy of the paper to Elsie. The title page looks like a tombstone. I was so tickled by the idea that I sent a copy to Gibson Bros. — Printers with my compliments with the outline of a tombstone round the printing and under their names I inserted the inscription "died 1891 much regretted" only I made it "d—d 1891" instead of writing it in full! I enclose copy of my handiwork that you may note the effect.

What is your father up to I wonder. He not only wrote to Sen. Dawes — a letter I have not seen yet — but has also written something or other to Mr. Crouter about the Volta Prize and the unjust attacks upon me in the deaf-mute newspapers.

3

Mr. Crouter has written to him asking permission to print his letter in the Silent World. Mr. Crouter adds:- "I think it time that the attacks of Institution papers upon the motives that have actuated Dr. Bell in his efforts to confer lasting benefits upon the deaf of this country should be met. I have no sympathy with them — no just or high-minded man can have." etc.

I don't know why it is that these attacks make so little impression upon me. I suppose I have grown callous and thick-skinned — and feel them no more. So far from feeling hurt by them — I rather enjoy reading them. Queer isn't it? I cannot realize that I am the person

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attacked — but look upon myself somehow as a third person — and I — a mere looker on. I realize too that these attacks are the evidences of victory for me — for surely no one would impugn an opponent's motives so long as he had good arguments to fight with. You don't throw mud until your ammunition has given out. That little letter Westervelt gave to you touched me more than all the abuse that has fallen to my lot. I am so unaccustomed to kind words that a little letter like that goes a long way into my heart. By the bye where is that letter? Please send it here — I would like to show it to my mother.

A lot of Kodac pictures have arrived. Some are good — others bad and still more indifferent. They are from your little Kodac. My large ones have not yet put in an appearance.

Mr. Sanders has written to notify us that he is ready to receive our promised subscription of \$15,000.

4

Gallandet hangs fire — no reply to my letter yet. I wrote as friendly a note as it was possible for me to send under the circumstances. If he will only respond like a gentleman — I won't harbor any ill-will against him. I have always treated him with courtesy and it is surely his duty to treat me in the same way. If he does not — I shall certainly ask for an investigation from his Board of Directors.

I have sent another batch of letters to Mr. Fechheimer, Miss Yale, Mr. Greenberger and Mr. Spencer. It can do no harm to keep them fully posted as to what is going on. Mr. McCurdy has utterly ignored your instructions — and has employed the prettiest typewriter he could find! Young too — think of that.

It really is very wrong of me to write all this stuff to you — for I should have been in bed long ago. I am afraid I can't keep it up for long.

Love to Elsie.

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Your loving husband, Alec. Mrs. A. Graham Bell, Shelburn Hotel, Atlantic City, N. J.